



Respect Works Here

Community Champion

The first thing you notice about **Lisa Kurulok** is her smile. This is quickly followed by her energy, which she uses to help just about everyone she meets.

Lisa is employed by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and uses her knowledge and skills to volunteer for the Community Income Tax program. Through the Friendship Centre and People Place in Vernon, the program assists seniors, newcomers to Canada and people with low incomes or disabilities complete their income tax forms.

"We are there to help people," says Lisa. Every year she helps over 200 people and has been volunteering for the last 20 years.

She also bakes for the CRA's charitable campaign in the fall to raise money for the United Way.

She is also part of a small team who contributes to lunch fundraisers. She takes homemade food into the office and places it in a crock pot to share the lunch with co-workers. "We have a hot homemade lunch by a minimum donation and we raise money for our community. It's a win-win," says Lisa.

Lisa has been involved with many different groups, one of which is Toastmasters. She has been a member for 17 years, 16 of which she has been on the club's executive. She says the group has boosted her self-confidence to be able to help others.

She has also volunteered at Kindale Developmental Association, helping with their annual auction and many other fundraising events. Lisa shares that her sister has a developmental disability and lives in supportive housing through Venture Training. She believes this has provided her with a deeper understanding of others who may be living with disability.

She self-describes as an aboriginal '60's Scoop Kid and feels she won the adoption lottery. "My sister and I are so fortunate to have caring and supportive parents who chose us. I didn't realize I was culturally different for a long time. I felt unconditional love from parents who chose me," she says.

In 2019, Lisa took part in a Kairos Blanket Exercise which explores the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. In the exercise, blankets are arranged on the floor to represent land while participants are invited to step into the roles of First Nations, Inuit and later Métis peoples. She states, "I truly felt after the exercise that I was in between blankets and that I was an Indigenous person accepted in both cultures."

Helping at the Upper Room Mission is another way that Lisa gives back to the community every Christmas by serving food and clearing tables.

“ I believe there is no greater gift than to give and to graciously accept gratitude. ”

~ Lisa Kurulok

"My mom taught me to be kind and generous and as a result I believe there is no greater gift than to give and to graciously accept gratitude".

When she lived in Vancouver, she would knit scarves and mittens and hand them out with a co-worker to those who lived in the vicinity of Hastings Street.

You might also see her during the anti-bullying campaign in February when she distributes dozens of cupcakes on behalf of North Okanagan Youth and Family Services.

Lisa volunteers her time in many different ways, her positive energy almost preceding her as she continues to help others.

